

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.(original) A method for the anaerobic biological degradation of soil-contaminating aromatic and/or aliphatic hydrocarbons present at a contaminated location, wherein a combination of one or more humic acids, if desired as salt, and at least one electron acceptor is added to anaerobic bacterial populations.

2.(original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said electron acceptor is selected from nitrogenous compounds, in particular nitrate, nitrite and/or N_2O ; sulfate; chlorate; chlorinated hydrocarbons; and combinations thereof.

3.(original) A method according to claim 2, wherein said electron acceptor is nitrate.

4.(original) A method according to claim 2, wherein said electron acceptor is perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, 1,2-dichloroethane, chlorophenol, chlorobenzoic acid and/or chlorobenzene.

5.(currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein said location is a contaminated soil and wherein said combination of humic acids and electron acceptor is introduced into the soil by means of injection.

6.(currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein said aromatic hydrocarbons comprise BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and/or xylene),

polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), aliphatic hydrocarbons (alkanes, alkenes, oil), or mixtures thereof, which hydrocarbons may or may not be halogenated.

7.(original) A method according to claim 6, wherein said aromatic hydrocarbons comprise benzene which may or may not be chlorinated, preferably monochlorobenzene.

8.(currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein said humic acids or salts thereof are used in purified form and/or in the form of compost, humus-rich percolate and/or vegetable material.

9.(original) A mixture of humic acid and nitrate comprising an aqueous solution of 1-10 wt.% of humic acid and 2-20 wt.% of nitrate (expressed as sodium nitrate).

10.(original) Use of a mixture according to claim 9, for the anaerobic biological degradation of aromatic and aliphatic hydrocarbons.